



Regulatory Division
North Permits Section

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS
PANAMA CITY REGULATORY OFFICE
1002 WEST 23rd STREET, SUITE 350
PANAMA CITY, FLORIDA 32405-3648

August 16, 2007

PUBLIC NOTICE

Relocation of the Panama City – Bay County International Airport
Permit Application No. SAJ-2001-5264(IP-GAH)
Record of Decision and Issuance of Department of the Army Permit

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: The purpose of this public notice is to inform the public of our Record of Decision (ROD) to issue a Department of the Army permit to the Panama City – Bay County International Airport and Industrial District (District) for the relocation of the Panama City – Bay County International Airport (PFN) to a 4,037-acre site, known as the West Bay Site, in Bay County, Florida. The 50-year permit authorizes the impact of 586.2 acres of Corps jurisdictional wetlands (an additional 9 acres of isolated, non-jurisdictional wetlands will also be impacted) for the construction of Phase 1 of the relocated airport, including an access road from County Road 388 to the airport site.

A copy of the ROD and issued permit will be available for review at the Corps' Regulatory Office in Panama City, Florida, located at 1002 West 23rd Street, Suite 350; and online on the Jacksonville District home page at <http://www.saj.usace.army.mil>.

PROJECT HISTORY AND BACKGROUND: On November 7, 2001 the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) published in the *Federal Register* a Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Assessment to consider alternatives to meet forecast growth in aviation demand in the Panama City-Bay County region and to respond to the District's proposal to relocate airport operations from the existing location to the applicant's preferred site north of West Bay in Bay County, Florida. The FAA held agency and public scoping meetings on December 13, 2001. Following a review of written comments submitted by federal, state, and local governmental agencies and the public, and a review of available information regarding the potential for significant environmental impacts, including impacts to wetlands, the FAA determined that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) would be prepared for the project.

By letter dated April 26, 2002 the FAA requested that the Corps participate in the EIS as a cooperating agency. The FAA was the lead agency for the EIS. The Corps agreed to the request on May 20, 2002.

In July 2002 the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and the applicant requested that the Corps participate in the FDEP's Ecosystem Team Permitting (ETP) process for the proposed relocation of PFN to the West Bay Site. The Corps began participation in the ETP process with the second meeting of the ETP team in December 2002. Although the Corps agreed to participate in the ETP process, participation by the Corps was secondary to the Corps' responsibilities under National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Clean Water Act (CWA), and other federal statutes and regulations. The Corps used the ETP process as a forum to discuss and review with other federal and state agencies, the applicant, and the applicant's consultants and agents, proposed project impacts on the environment, particularly impacts to waters of the United States, including wetlands. On December 1, 2006 FDEP issued an Ecosystem Management Agreement (EMA) with the District. The EMA included a Wetland Resource Permit for the entire, proposed, multi-phase, 50-year project. The state permit/certification number is 03-0212186-004-DF.

On February 21, 2003 a Department of the Army permit application was received from the applicant, which requested a 25-year permit to fill 1929 acres of wetlands in three phases for the development of the entire proposed site at West Bay for a new regional airport to replace the existing PFN facility. Subsequent to the submittal of the original permit application, the applicant modified the proposed project's impacts to wetlands, phasing and timeline.

The FAA held an agency meeting for the EIS on May 1, 2003 and a public information meeting on May 13, 2003. On November 26, 2004 the FAA issued a Draft EIS (DEIS), which described in detail the initial (Phase 1) development components of the proposed relocated airport through the year 2018, which would consist of an airfield and terminal facilities, a primary runway of 8,400 feet, and a general aviation crosswind runway of 5,000 feet. The DEIS disclosed for informational purposes the ultimate development of the site, which would depend upon aviation growth in the Panama City vicinity and the applicant's needs. The applicant subsequently identified five phases for the ultimate development of the proposed relocation site within a 50-year timeframe, during which the airport's initial facilities could be expanded to include an extension of the primary air carrier runway, a second parallel air carrier runway, and additional landside facilities. Comments received during the DEIS comment period were collected and compiled by the FAA for review by the FAA and Corps.

On December 8, 2004 the Corps issued a public notice to inform the public that a public information workshop and public hearing on the DEIS would be held by the FAA, as lead agency, and the Corps, as a cooperating agency, on January 11, 2005 in Panama City, Florida. The public notice disclosed that the Corps had received an application for a Department of the Army permit pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act for the proposed relocation project, and that a separate public notice would be published specifically pursuant to the Corps' evaluation of the permit application.

On January 11, 2005 the FAA's and the Corps' co-sponsored public information meeting and public hearing were held. The proceedings of the public hearing and verbal

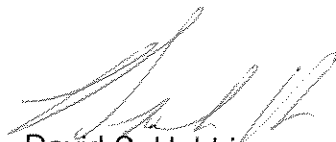
comments from the public, which were recorded by court reporters, and written comments collected at the hearing, were compiled by the FAA for review by the FAA and Corps.

The Corps issued public notices regarding the Section 404 permit application on April 25, 2005 and May 2, 2005.

On May 12, 2006 A Notice of Availability of the FEIS was published in the Federal Register with a comment period from May 19, 2006 through July 5, 2006. The notice stated that the Corps is a cooperating agency for the FEIS, and directed that all comments should be submitted to the FAA. Comments received during the FEIS comment period were collected and compiled by the FAA for review by the FAA and Corps. The FAA issued its ROD on September 15, 2006.

Only the initial Phase 1 portion of the project was provided in sufficient detail to evaluate for authorization for construction. Authorization for the construction of subsequent phases, as modifications to the 50-year permit issued pursuant to the Corps' ROD, would require substantial additional detail, additional NEPA review, either as supplemental EIS's or EAs, as well as review under CWA and other appropriate federal statutes and regulations. Review of the individual construction phases would include evaluation for minimization of impacts to the aquatic environment and mitigation. The permit allows the applicant's proposed mitigation plan for the ultimate proposed project to be implemented, before approval of future individual construction phases. Information in the FEIS concerning ultimate development of the site could be the basis for subsequent NEPA documents. In compliance with NEPA, succeeding environmental documents evaluating future airport proposals could tier off the FEIS. The Corps has adopted the FAA's FEIS and the FAA's ROD, as supporting documentation for its ROD.

If you have any questions regarding this public notice, you may contact Mr. Don Hambrick by letter to the letterhead address, by telephone at 850-763-0717 ext. 25, or by email at gordon.a.hambrick@saj02.usace.army.mil.



David S. Hobbie
Chief, Regulatory Division